

WASHINGTON TIMES
4 November 1985**PRUDEN ON
POLITICS**By
Wesley Pruden**A little thrashing
for 'Miss America'**

All the world's suddenly a stage, and Mikhail Gorbachev has successfully cast the Soviet Union as wife-beater.

You-know-who is playing the role of the little woman who has to learn to love it.

No matter how hard the bearish groom may choose to be, "Miss America" must smile through her tears and whisper, "Pour it on."

That's the only way the events of New Orleans, Kabul and now Mariel make any sense.

"What you have to understand," says a top official of a previous administration who is intimately acquainted with the Soviet hierarchy, "is that Gorbachev's No. 1 priority is to show how tough he is to the people who put him where he is. Arms control comes only after that."

Ronald Reagan's first priority, as imposed on him by the shrill and relentless cacophony of the big media, the arms-control bureaucracy and his own political establishment, is to show how "nice" and "gentle" and "peace-loving" he is.

This gives Mr. Gorbachev the advantage, as children could plainly see. Ronald Reagan's constituency, growing more hysterical as the Geneva summit approaches, is desperate to have an agreement, any kind of an agreement, to make the world safe for the little children of the world, their kittens and the pretty flowers.

If Mr. Reagan leaves Geneva without such a Soviet blessing, the fault will be Ronald Reagan's. This prospect seems to have rattled even Mr. Reagan, who knows as well as anyone what peanut butter this is. He may be lulling everyone into a sucker's game, but, for whatever the reason, Mr. Reagan has suddenly adopted Jimmy Carter's vocabulary, with his talk of American "paranoia" and the need to "start all over."

Mr. Gorbachev has no such need to feel good about himself. He can demand that the United States betray a defector in New Orleans, confident that Washington will acquiesce and that the American secretary of state will even say what an artful piece of work the State Department's double-dealing was.

And now, rotten luck, a Soviet soldier in Afghanistan, as credulous and as gullible as Miro-

lav Medvid, darts through the front gate at the embassy in Kabul and expects to find a welcome.

U.S. officials say the 19-year-old Soviet private "seemed confused." That's State Department jive for, "If he thinks he's going to get any sympathy from us, he ought to ask a Soviet seaman."

The Soviets cut off electricity and water to the embassy, and when an American diplomat went outside to the street, he was roughed up. Powerful searchlights were brought up to bathe the American compound in harsh light. The Soviets know how American governments love this sort of treatment.

"The only option," an American Embassy source told The Associated Press, "would be if this person were to decide to go back where he came from." You can bet that's what the State Department thinks about "this person."

The ultimate sock in the eye, the teeth broken in the act of love, is the disclosure — on the front page of this newspaper — that Soviet and Bulgarian freighters are transferring enormous amounts of tanks and other weapons of war to Nicaraguan coastal freighters for delivery to the Sandinistas.

These deliveries were confirmed by aerial photographs taken Thursday night by an SR-71 Blackbird reconnaissance plane. With more respect for his adversary, Mikhail Gorbachev wouldn't have made such a fuss in New Orleans. He wouldn't have ordered the humiliation of the American Embassy in Kabul. He would have waited two weeks to supply the Sandinistas.

He knows who he's dealing with. He would never have ordered such provocation on the eve of the summit if he were not confident that he could do it and get by with it.

Not only get by with it — but have "Miss America" begging for more.